

TOP 4 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO ADVOCATE!

Health Care Advocacy is an opportunity for you to make an impact on health care and physician-related issues that impact doctors and patients every day. By getting involved and encouraging your colleagues to do the same, you can help increase the impact of the advocacy program for Ontario doctors through the Ontario Medical Association.



Meet with your Elected Official or Candidate

Meeting face-to-face with an elected official and/or party candidate in your riding provides the opportunity to develop and maintain relationships in order to better advocate for health care policies. Meetings can be arranged by OMA staff, who can also provide you with briefing documents and key messages. Our team is here to help. Some helpful hints to keep in mind before your first meeting:

- Be brief, stick to key messages and keep it locally-focused.
- Be responsive, positive and professional. Be prepared, answer questions and provide additional information if requested.
- After a meeting, follow up with a thank you card and email that outlines the points of discussion within 10 days of the meeting.
- Plan your next contact. Keep in touch with your elected official and/or candidate and request follow up meetings. Remember, this is to develop and build a relationship.
- Don't expect results immediately. Results come in time, after many meetings (once that relationship is built).
- Leave your business card and get the business cards of the elected official and their staff.



Write a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor is a very effective technique to voice professional opinion on an issue. It is one of the most read sections in the newspaper and closely followed by elected officials. Newspapers often use this section as a gauge of public opinion.

- Write to national, regional and community papers. Don't forget medical journals.
- Write within 48 hours of an article being published and by email.
- Keep the content short (150 to 250 words), provide new/additional information and expert opinion.
- Writing letters to the editor shows that you are aware - not just a bystander - and involved in the civic process.



Speak at a Rotary Club

Speaking at a local rotary club provides an opportunity for you to discuss local issues with a community group. This enables a sincere conversation of the daily issues that affect a local community and its physicians and patients, and allows for the local community to comment on and provide feedback. It is an easy way to get out in front of local matters and get opinion fast. Other options and possible speaking opportunities can take place at a:

- Chamber of Commerce (Local)
- Board of Trade (Local)



Host an Advocacy Session in your Region

One of the most effective ways to spread advocacy efforts is by hosting a training session in your region. Gather 10-15 physicians, residents and/or medical students in your community who are interested in learning about health care advocacy, then contact the OMA to set up the meeting at public.affairs@oma.org. During these sessions, you will learn how to refine your elevator pitch, get tips on how to meet with your local elected officials, use key messages effectively and speak publicly about issues that impact patients every day.

By training and activating more health care advocates to meet with elected officials/candidates and speak publicly about health care related issues, the OMA will be able to create a stronger message on behalf of all of Ontario's doctors and patients.

Staff at the OMA are here to assist you in any way possible and can provide further information as required.

If you are interested in getting involved and becoming a health care advocate, please contact public.affairs@oma.org.

